MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI S.R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) There have been reports from time to time about the flow of illegal funds to various secessionist and militant organisations through clandesting channels and in contravention of the law. The Government and all the concerned security and enforcement agencies have been continuously making efforts to contain such possibilities through sustained vigilance, inquiries and investigations, and operations against various secessioinist and militant organisations in different parts of the Country.

Hike in the Prices of Petroleum Products

*217. DR. JAGANNATH MISHRA:
SHRI SANATAN BISI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Oil Pool Account deficit would increase to Rs. 15,500 crores by the end of current financial year despite recent hike in prices of petroleum products;

(b) whether Government are sustaining a loss of Rs. 13 crores on account of oil deficit annually;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether there is any proposal for another hike in the prices of petroleum products; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (e) The cumulative outstandings of the oil companies from the oil pool account which were Rs. 5,700 crores as on 31.3.96 are estimated to be Rs. 15,500 crores by 31.3.97. Deficits have arisen in the pool account because the sales realisation from the products did not fully cover the costs incurred. The position of the oil pool account is monitored on a continuous basis and remedial measures taken to contain the deficit.

LPG connections in 1996-97

*218. SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the target of new domestic LPG connections for the year 1996-97;

(b) the number of new connections released by various oil companies, so far; and

(c) what steps are being taken to augment the LPG supplies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) The target for release of new LPG connections in the country during 1996-97 has been fixed at 20 lakhs.

(b) Public Sector Oil Companies have released 10,86,792 new LPG connections during April-Oct./96.

(c) Efforts are constantly on to release LPG connections to as many applicants as early as possible. Plans have been drawn for higher availability of LPG by increasing the capacity of existing production sources, putting up new plants and through higher imports through existing and new facilities.

Proposal from Andhra Pradesh under Remote Area Development Programme

*219. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal under Remote Area Development Programme was forwarded on the 31st October, 1995, for sanction of Rs. 246 crores for Mehboobnagar district;

(b) if so, whether the proposal is still pending with Government for technical and financial clearance;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the reasons for not clearing the project so far; and